

January 2014 Newsletter

CIRM January Newsletter

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CIRM's Top Ten Blog Post of 2013



The entire CIRM family hopes you had a wonderful holiday and we wish you the best in 2014. To reflect on the past year for CIRM and the stem cell field, we compiled a list of our ten most popular CIRM blog posts of 2013. The blogs include an eclectic mix of stories about the latest in stem cell research, patient advocacy, and education.

- [View our list of the ten most popular CIRM blogs of 2013](#)

CIRM-Funded Heart Therapy Approved for Phase 2 Clinical Trial

In late December, a CIRM-funded therapy aimed at treating patients who have had a heart attack was given approval to begin a Phase 2 clinical trial. The treatment, developed by Capricor Therapeutics, Inc., uses unrelated donor-derived stem cells, called cardiosphere-derived cells, that are infused into a patient's artery with the aim of reducing scarring caused by heart attacks. In a Phase 1 clinical trial designed to test the safety of the therapy, the cells were introduced into 14 patients and were found to be safe. This approval marks a milestone for CIRM as it's the first time we've funded a therapy into a Phase 2 clinical trial. This next phase will involve an estimated 300 patients who have had heart attacks.

- [Read our press release about Capricor's CIRM-funded Phase 2 Clinical Trial](#)
- [Read our blog about the Phase 2 Clinical Trial](#)

CIRM Board Funds More than \$61 million in Cancer, Sickle Cell Disease and Vision Loss

At its December 12th meeting, the CIRM Governing Board voted to approve \$61 million in funding for its third round of Disease Team awards. This round of awards targets diseases like leukemia and solid tumor cancers such as breast and prostate that have not responded to conventional treatment. Other diseases targeted include sickle cell disease and macular degeneration, one of the leading causes of blindness in the elderly. The Disease Team awards are designed to encourage multidisciplinary teams of researchers from academic institutions, medical centers and industry to work together and to develop new treatments for a broad range of therapies. The recipients were selected from 14 applications, all of which were reviewed by an independent group of internationally renowned scientists.

- [Read our press release about the Disease Team awards](#)
- [Read our blog about the Disease Team awards](#)

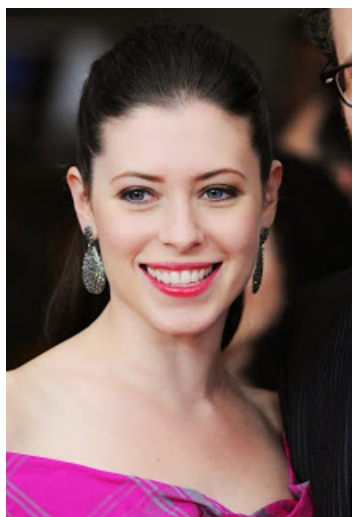
Healing Hearts with Stem Cells: CIRM Hosts Live Google Hangout



On December 19th, CIRM hosted a Google Hangout discussion about progress toward stem cell-based therapies for heart disease. The panel of speakers included CIRM grantees Dr. Joseph Wu from Stanford, Dr. Bruce Conklin from the Gladstone Institutes. Also on the live video call were Dr. Cathy Priest, a Senior Science Officer here at the stem cell agency, and Fred Lesikar, who took part in a clinical trial involving stem cells after he had a heart attack.

- [Watch the Google Hangout video on heart disease](#)
- [Read our blog about the Hangout](#)

Lauren Miller, Actress, Screenwriter and Alzheimer's Activist, Joins CIRM Board



Lauren Miller: Photo credit: Ivan Nikolov / WENN

Lauren Miller, an actress, screen writer and activist committed to raising awareness about Alzheimer's disease, has been appointed to CIRM's governing Board. Miller, who was appointed to the Board by Governor Jerry Brown, starred in the movies Superbad and 50/50 and co-wrote and starred in the movie "For a Good Time, Call...". She is also the co-founder of the non-profit Hilarity for Charity. Miller's commitment to raising awareness about Alzheimer's comes from her family's battle against the disease. Her grandfather died of Alzheimer's and her mother was diagnosed with it when she was just 55 years old.

- [Read our press release about Miller's appointment](#)
- [Read our blog about Miller's appointment](#)

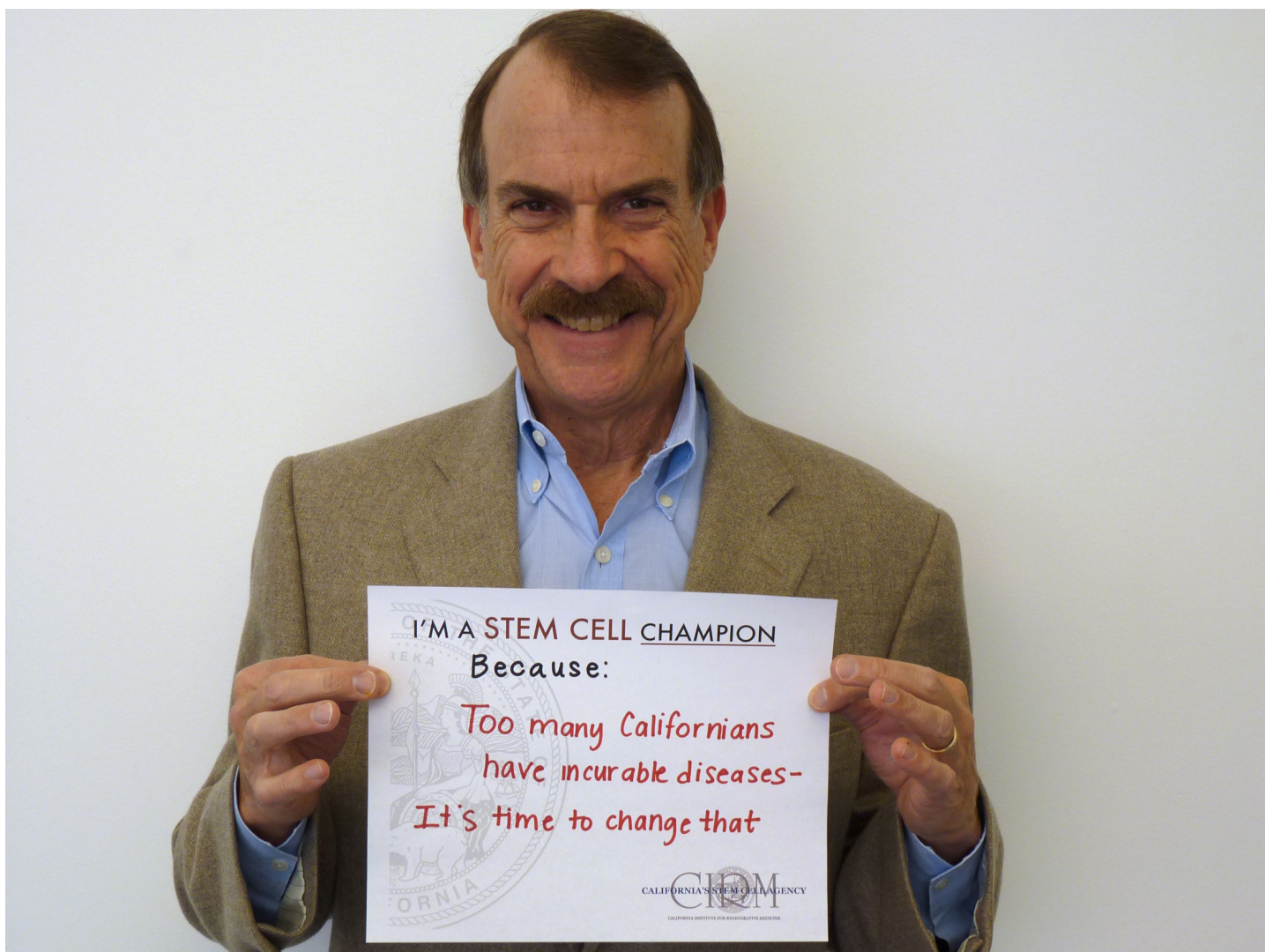
CIRM Blogs On Location from the 2013 World Stem Cell Summit



Several CIRM grantees and staff were featured speakers and panelists in this year's World Stem Cell Summit held December 4-6 in San Diego. An estimated 1,200 attendees from 40 countries attended. Our staff posted several blogs per day during the summit to describe the various presentations and panel discussions. Included in the blogs, is a summary of a CIRM-hosted public forum that focused on progress toward stem cell based therapies.

- [Read CIRM's World Stem Cell Summit Blogs](#)

CIRM Invites You to Become a Stem Cell Champion



Champions come in many different shapes and sizes and excel in many different arenas, from sports and the arts to human rights. In the world of stem cell research there are many champions. There are the researchers who toil year after year, searching for a deeper understanding of how stem cells work; there are the patient advocates who push hard for public support of research; and there are the ordinary people who support stem cell research because they know that one day they, or someone they love, could possibly benefit from a stem cell treatment. In December at the World Stem Cell Summit, we launched a new social media campaign to celebrate these champions. We've devoted a page on our website to the campaign and we invite you to become a stem cell champ too.

- [Learn more about being a stem cell champ](#)
- [Read our blogs about the launch of the stem cell champions campaign](#)

New Video: Actor Michael York Talks about His Battle with Amyloidosis



Michael York, star of films such as Cabaret, Logan's Run, and Austin Powers, spoke at the December Board meeting about his personal battle with amyloidosis, a rare, often fatal disease caused by the abnormal deposit of proteins called amyloids in various tissues of the body. Last July, York had a successful blood stem cell transplant to treat his condition. This Spotlight on Disease seminar also featured Dr. Robert Vescio, director of Cedars-Sinai's Multiple Myeloma and Amyloidosis Program. Videos of the presentations are now available on our website.

- Watch the Spotlight on Amyloidosis videos

CIRM President Alan Trounson's November Stem Cell Research Picks

Each month CIRM President Alan Trounson reports on advances in stem cell science by highlighting recently published papers from CIRM grantees and other leading research teams around the world.

- Read the president's December report [pdf]
- Browse the report archive

1700 and Counting: The Latest Publications on CIRM-funded Research

With over 1700 published discoveries, CIRM grantees are making steady progress on understanding the molecular basis of stem cell biology and moving stem cell-based therapies toward clinical trials. Here is one example of CIRM-funded research that was published in December along with a press release from the grantees' home institution and a CIRM Stem Cell Research Blog:

December 15th - *Nature Cell Biology*

- UCLA Release: Adult stem cells found to suppress cancer while dormant
- CIRM Blog: Gene that blocks skin stem cells from initiating cancer may provide key to prevention

Upcoming CIRM Events



January 23rd, noon-1pm (pacific): Join us for a live Google Hangout about progress toward stem cell therapies for diabetes. Speakers include: Chris Stiehl, a patient advocate for diabetes who has been living with type 1 for 50 years; Francisco Prieto, the diabetes patient advocate member of CIRM's governing board; and a representative from Viacyte, Inc., a CIRM-funded company that has developed a stem cell-based device for treating type 1 diabetes. Visit the Diabetes Hangout event page on January 23rd to watch it live.

January 29th: The CIRM governing board will hold its first of seven meetings of 2014. This meeting will take place in Berkeley, Ca. The agenda and details will be posted to the **meetings page** 10 days before the event.

CIRM Funding Opportunities

RFA 13-07: CIRM Alpha Stem Cell Clinics Network: Coordinating and Information Management Center - Application forms will be available on the CIRM website (<https://grants.cirm.ca.gov>) in mid-January 2014. Applications will only be accepted from applicants who 1) submitted an Letter of Intent (LOI) in December and 2) are notified by CIRM that they are eligible to apply. CIRM conducted a webinar for prospective applicants on Tuesday, November 5, 2013 to address questions about both RFA 13-06 and 13-07 and the

application process. A recording of the webinar, presentation slides, and the Q&A transcript are now available on the RFA 13-07 page.

RFA 13-06: CIRM Alpha Stem Cell Clinics Network: Alpha Stem Cell Clinics - Only those applicants that submitted an Letter of Intent (LOI) in December that was accepted by CIRM may submit an application. Applicants will be notified by CIRM if they are eligible to submit an application and application forms will be available on the CIRM website <https://grants.cirm.ca.gov> in mid-January 2014. CIRM conducted a webinar for prospective applicants on Tuesday, November 5, 2013 to address questions about both RFA 13-06 and 13-07 and the application process. A recording of the webinar, presentation slides, and the Q&A transcript are now available on the RFA 13-06 page.

RFA 13-05: CIRM Tools and Technologies III Awards - Deadline for submission of Preliminary applications (PreApps) is **5:00 pm (PST) on January 7, 2014**.

RFA 13-04: External Innovation Pilot Program - Prior to submitting an application, a PI must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) describing the proposed project. CIRM will evaluate the LOI -- refer to Section VIII.A. of the RFA for evaluation criteria. **This RFA is targeted at only the most exceptional proposals: CIRM expects to support only one or two such projects each year.**

RFA 13-03: CIRM Strategic Partnership III Awards - CIRM intends to offer repeat calls under this initiative every 6-9 months. The focus, scope and objective may differ with each solicitation. **CIRM conducted a webinar for prospective applicants on August 7, 2013** to address questions about the RFA and application process. Click here to watch webinar and view Q & A.

RFA 09-04: CIRM Research Leadership Awards - Applications due on January 14, 2014.

PA 12-08: CIRM Patent Assistance Fund Awards - Application opportunities on a monthly basis until June 30, 2014
Eligibility: Only Technology Transfer Officials at current CIRM Grantee institutions are eligible to apply for funds under this program.

PA 08-06: CIRM Conference Grants - Applications for conference grants will be accepted, reviewed and approved
Get more info about CIRM RFAs
Sign up to receive CIRM funding announcements

Source URL: <http://www.cirm.ca.gov/about-cirm/newsletter/january-2014-newsletter>